

REMARKS

Preliminarily, Applicant thanks the Examiner for granting a telephone interview to Applicant's attorney, James D. Schweikert, on 02 October 2008. During that interview the outstanding 103(a) rejection was discussed. Specifically, the Examiner's suggestions on page 5 of the outstanding office action were discussed. The Examiner's comments were most helpful in preparing this response and have been incorporated herein.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 18 are currently pending in the application. Claims 2, 5, and 19 have been cancelled; Claims 8-10 and 13-17 have previously been cancelled. Claims 1, 4, 11, 12, and 18 have been amended. No new claims have been added.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 11, 12, 18, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ookouchi et al 5,571,327 in view of Long 4,609,577.

Independent claims 1, 4 and 18 have been amended to recite in part a bath of molten coating alloy containing Al-Zn alloy, and a component, or a layer of a component, made from stainless steel containing greater than 0.10 wt % amount of nitrogen distributed substantially uniformly through its microstructure as an austenite stabiliser (emphasis added).

As noted in previous responses, Applicant points out that performance in one environment is not necessarily indicative of performance in another. The subject matter of the amended independent claims in the present application is concerned with stainless steel containing nitrogen having improved performance life in the very particular high temperature environment of molten AL-Zn alloy, such as 55% Al-Zn alloy at around 600°C. The nitrogen contained in the stainless steel is explicitly greater than 0.10 wt % amount and distributed substantially uniformly through the microstructure of a component, or a layer of a component, as

an austenite stabiliser. Applicant further notes again that metal that is corrosion resistant in one environment is not necessarily corrosion resistant in another environment.

Long merely discloses improved machinability, metal-to-metal wear resistance and corrosion resistance (referring to aqueous corrosion resistance or to resistance to high temperature oxidation only) for a metal roll used in a continuous casting environment and hot-strip mill run-out tables, i.e. the rolls are exposed to high temperatures and contact with hot metal surfaces and water cooling sprays.

Ookouchi et al merely teaches a method of manufacturing a sink roller for a hot dip coating process wherein the sink roller is constructed by casting using an austenitic stainless steel material. There is no motivation to believe that the teachings of Long would have any benefit in the environment of Oolouchi. Let alone would one arrive at the specific subject matter now recited in amended independent claims 1, 4, and 18.

Paragraphs [0040] to [0044] of the present application disclose the benefits obtained by having nitrogen present in stainless steel when it is used in contact with molten Al-Zn alloy. These benefits would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art from the teachings of Long or Ookouchi et al, alone or in combination. It is only with hindsight, after reading Applicant's disclosure, does one now see the subject matter as now recited in amended independent claims 1, 4, and 18.

For at least the reasons stated above, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art that the improved performance in the environment described in Long would provide improved performance in all high temperature environments, and especially not in contact with molten Al-Zn alloy, as now recited in the amended independent claims. Thus, for at least this reason, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the material of Long with the coating apparatus of Ookouchi.

Neither, Ookouchi et al 5,571,327 nor Long 4,609,577, alone or in combination, show or suggest a bath of molten coating alloy containing Al-Zn alloy, and a component made from stainless steel containing greater than 0.10 wt % amount of nitrogen distributed substantially uniformly through its microstructure as an austenite stabiliser as now recited in independent claims 1, 4 and 18. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the above referenced rejections.

Claim 3 depends from amended independent claim 1 and claims 6, 7, 11, and 12 ultimately depend from amended independent claim 4, and respectively contain all of the limitations recited therein, and are therefore allowable for the reasons stated above. Further, claims 2, 5, and 19 have been cancelled.

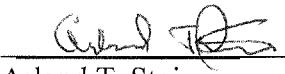
In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6-7, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being indefinite. Applicant believes that the present amendments to the claims address this rejection and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 18 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice thereof. Applicant encourages the Examiner to call its counsel, Arland T. Stein, at 614-233-5104 to resolve any additional questions that the Examiner may have to place the claims in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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